



RECURVITROSTERN RUBRICOLLIS: Temm.

In situ and the bird's eye

RECURVIROSTRA RUBRICOLLIS, *Temm.*

Red-necked Avocet.

Recurvirostra rubricollis, Temm. Man. d'Orn., Part II. p. 592.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 592.—Gould, Syn. Birds of Australia, Part II.

————— *Novæ-Hollandiæ*, Vieill. 2nde Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. iii. p. 103? and Ency. Méth., Part I. p. 360?

Yá-jín-goó-rong, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

THE western and southern portions of Australia appear to be inhabited by this beautiful Avocet in far greater numbers than any other. I did not myself meet with it during my rambles in New South Wales, but I have now and then seen it in collections from those parts. It is one of the few birds, the range of which extends on both sides of the equator, and which find an equally congenial habitat in the northern hemisphere as in the southern. I have seen numerous specimens from the provinces of India, which so closely accorded with the Australian bird, that I could not discover the slightest difference between them.

Like its European representative, the Red-necked Avocet frequents the shallow parts of lakes, inlets of the sea, and the muddy banks of rivers, often wading knee-deep in the water, and readily swimming when necessity requires it so to do.

Its food consists of minute marine mollusca and insects, which it gathers from the surface of the mud with its delicately organized bill, the structure of which is admirably adapted for the purpose: not less appropriate is the structure of its feet; which being partially webbed, enable the bird to pass over the soft surface of the ground with far greater ease than could be effected by any of the Sandpipers, whose toes are divided to their base. In Western Australia the favourite localities of this bird are the lakes in the neighbourhood of Perth and on Rottnest Island, where it is seen in small flocks in company with the *Himantopus leucocephalus*. In South Australia, the River Murray and the shores of Lake Alexandrina afford situations equally adapted for its existence.

Its flight is easy and capable of being long sustained.

The sexes are alike in plumage and differ but little in size.

Head and upper half of the neck chestnut, extending downwards on the front of the neck; middle of the wings, primaries and part of the scapularies black, the rest of the plumage white; irides bright red; bill black; legs greyish blue; tarsi and feet tinged with olive.

The figures represent both sexes of the natural size.